

## Sgt. Richard DeForest (Captain Dick) Chamberlain

From Snake River Echoes

Born: Aug. 24, 1843 in Stark County, Illinois      Died: Apr. 28, 1909 in Idaho Falls, Idaho

Dick Chamberlain was a man of many hats – saloonkeeper, mayor, cafe, bowling alley and billiards parlor owner – in the early days of Eagle Rock, Idaho.

Usually called D.F., he also answered to Dick and Dan. Dan, 37, is listed in the 1880 census as a “restaurateur” with wife Helen M. He was from Illinois. The Wheeler newspaper reported his saloon was doing a thriving business that fall. Two years later, he owned a two-story building, with drinks and billiard ball on the first floor, an organ upstairs for dancing events. Next door he ran a ten pin bowling alley. His large building was at the foot of Eagle Rock Street.

Chamberlain helped Ed Winn begin the first fire department and was appointed to the village council in 1889. By 1890, he was town mayor and Master of the local Masonic Lodge.

Chamberlain, a Union Civil War Veteran, also cofounder of the Grand Army of the Republic post. His saloon was a rough place. Several trouble makers went straight from the saloon to the cemetery, with Dick selling both a shot of whiskey and a plot.

His ownership of the Eagle Rock’s first cemetery is forgotten. In the 1880’s he acquired what he thought was title to the first burial ground. The land was about two and a half blocks south of the Broadway Bridge, on the Southwest side of Capital Avenue according to Fred Keefer.

Chamberlain charged \$5.00 for a lot, which held six graves or plots. He ran the growing cemetery from his Saloon. Trouble was he failed to keep many burial or death records. Considerable research was done with Mrs. Barzilla Clark on the old burial grounds. She thought “several hundred” once rested there. The oldest conformed plot was dated 1865, when a man fell while working on the Taylor Bridge, and was interred after dying of a broken back. Many of the old grave yard had no markers or once had wood markers long gone. Interments were done in a haphazard manner, she recalled.

The “man of many hats” tried to peddle the 13 acres in 1892 to the village board. He offered to sell the ground for \$50.00 an acre if the town would maintain it. The then ex-mayor could not produce clear title and most of the ground was found to be Government land. Chamberlain walked away from the whole project. Editor Wheeler began a campaign for a new cemetery, renamed Rose Hill in 1905.

Mrs. Clark remembered that “most” of the bodies were removed to the present Rose Hill Cemetery site, but not all.